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## Letters to the editor

A moderate's take on what is needed for the Lafayette School Board

To fellow residents who may also be in political limbo: the past two years have been a roller coaster with prior perspectives possibly in flux. That has certainly been my experience and perhaps yours. And it's OK.

So you know, I'm a triple vaccinated registered Democrat; definitely not a "Trumper" nor anti-vaxxer. The fact that I feel the need to state this says a lot about where we are today.

As for our local schools, I believe there have been failed policies and a misalignment of priorities that negatively impact our kids and our community. We all know the Lafayette School Board kept kids in distance learning months longer than required. But even now, it's astounding that in the 2022-2023 District Goals ([bit.ly/LAFSD\\_Goals](https://bit.ly/LAFSD_Goals)), there's no mention of working with parents on long-needed afterschool care and no mention of nutrition, greatly important especially post-pandemic. Plus, the essentials of "health and safety" are lumped together in one vague bullet point - and this document was reviewed and approved by the Board despite Sandy Hook, Parkland, Uvalde and the death of our own crossing guard Ashley Dias. These omissions are concerning.

The Lafayette School Board's failure to "advocate for children" - a responsibility stated in its Governance Handbook - has greatly contributed to my questioning of institutions that I've vehemently supported. But that's exactly what I want for our kids. While we may not always agree, I want our schools to be teaching students how to respectfully understand multiple viewpoints, use their brains and think critically.

I fear our current school board is not an embodiment of this and it's being reflected in our community. I believe all candidates want EVERY child to succeed and feel included, just as I do. There are just differences on how we get there and the roles in which our schools play. That said, as the school district has put DEIB above Curriculum and Instruction (see [lafsd.org](https://lafsd.org), "District" dropdown menu), then we need diverse perspectives.

Electing new voices gives us that. You have three individual votes. Use them. Our children and community will be better for it.

Lauren McCabe Herpich  
Lafayette

### Lafayette School Board Elections

Our public schools in Lafayette are among the best in the country. There are so many who contribute to our schools' success, but today I write to show support to our district's elected School Board and to encourage you to vote for incumbents Rob Sturm and Dave Smith this Fall.

The lockdown year was hard. But with no playbook, no roadmap, our Board came together, listened to our community, to state, Federal, and local guidance, and to a chorus of strong voices to find a safe and balanced way forward. As a parent of two young children, I appreciated their efforts to keep our kids learning.

Rob, Dave and the Board are committed to academic excellence, high performing schools, and to teaching our kids a broad perspective on history, culture, family, and what it means to be a kind citizen. Teaching our kids a diverse, "broad perspective" makes some folks uncomfortable. It shouldn't.

The world is diverse. Embracing that fact and working steadily against the tribal tendencies we all have is important if our children are going to be successful in an interconnected, interdependent society. Here in The Bay, we're blessed with the opportunity to engage with people, language, history, and cultures outside our own lived experience. That's a plus. Gaining that diverse, "broad perspective" is an

advantage available to our kids. And they will all be better citizens because of it. Rob Sturm, Dave Smith and our current Board supports lessons that offer a diverse, global view interwoven with traditional reading, math, and history lessons. To continue to build the strength of our schools, to highlight and celebrate all the colors of California, Lafayette deserves School Board leaders who are committed to welcoming diverse perspectives in the classroom.

Rob Sturm and Dave Smith have demonstrated a commitment to our community, to supporting and promoting a diverse and inclusive school, and to an open and transparent district. Please join me in voting for Rob and Dave for Lafayette School Board this Fall.

Robert Chevaleau  
Lafayette

In support of Lind, Larsen for Lafayette School District board

I am writing to ask for your support in voting for Sarah Lind and Neils Larsen in the upcoming election for the Lafayette School Board.

I have a son at Burton Valley Elementary School and a daughter at Stanley Middle School. I am a former teacher in the district and have worked with the youth in our community in many capacities. I currently substitute teach in our Lafayette schools and care deeply about the future of our students.

Like many parents, I had never been to a school board meeting until our schools were forced to close their doors in March of 2020. At that point I spent many evenings attending board meetings and was disillusioned by the apparent disconnect between the voices of the families and the decisions of the board.

Lind and Larsen have children in our district and are dedicated members of our community. They are focused on partnering with parents and teachers to keep their voices and the student needs at the center of their decision making process. They believe in keeping our students safe, promoting academic excellence, and fiscal responsibility (which includes responding to the enrollment declines our district experienced over the last few years).

Join me in voting for Sarah Lind and Neils Larsen for the Lafayette School Board.

Tracy Morrison  
Lafayette

Conservatives Target School Board Elections Nationwide and in Lamorinda

In 2020, Donald Trump spread the lie that the election was stolen. His supporters illegally accessed voting machines, urged elections officials to overturn the results, and sent false slates of electors to Congress. General Michael Flynn called for Trump to invoke the Insurrection Act, seize voting machines, and have the military rerun the election. On January 6, 2021, Trump supporters and organized militias stormed the Capitol to disrupt the peaceful transfer of power.

In 2022, conservatives have turned their focus to state and local politics. Leaders have promoted conspiracy theories about election fraud and "indoctrination" in public schools. States have banned abortion and passed laws restricting DEI and LGBTQIA education. Libraries have been ordered to pull books from the shelves. Militia members have threatened elections officials, school board members, and the LGBTQIA community. Flynn has endorsed candidates throughout the country for state and local elections, including school boards. He said "We need to take this country back one town at a time, one county at a time, one state at a time, if that's what it takes."

However, this is not just happening in far away places. It is happening right here in Lamorinda. Conservative candidates are running coordinated campaigns for Acalanes Unified High School District (AUHSD) and Lafayette School District (LAFSD). The campaigns' websites call for "transparency" and "critical thinking over ideologies", implying that teachers have a hidden agenda and are trying to "indoctrinate" children.

Some candidates have close ties to nationally prominent political operatives. Contra Costa County's elections website shows contributions from wealthy donors

inside and outside Lamorinda, including one of the biggest donors to both Turning Point USA and Project Veritas. One candidate's immediate family members have close relationships with Michael Flynn. Another candidate managed Peter Thiel's investment funds for years, and was tapped by Thiel for Trump's 2016 Treasury transition team.

Educate yourself on this year's candidates, their associations, their language and their goals. Educate your friends and family, donate, put up signs, and get out the vote. This year is different.

Chad Curran  
Orinda

#### Trump Appointee Running for Lamorinda High Schools board

The Republican party recently began a national campaign to take over local school boards as part of efforts to control state and local elected bodies. We are seeing the effect locally with a slate of three candidates, running as a bloc, for the Acalanes Union High School District board which oversees Acalanes, Campolindo, Las Lomas and Miramonte High Schools.

The Wall Street Journal (Dec. 7, 2016) reported that current Lafayette resident Mark Woolway had been appointed by Trump to his transition team for the Treasury Department. Woolway was an associate of Peter Thiel at Paypal, and The Guardian on Feb. 10, 2017 attributed Woolway's appointment to his close association with Thiel. Woolway is part of a three-person AUHSD slate which includes Renee Nowac and Gabe Ledeen. Ledeen is no lightweight in Libertarian circles either; the Federalist Society, the group responsible for Trump's Supreme Court selections, published a very laudatory report on Ledeen on Nov. 18, 2021. None of them have children attending any of the Lamorinda high schools. So what is their motivation? These candidates talk about "transparency" and "critical thinking" in our schools, as if they are being impaired. They make no mention of the extraordinary academic standing of the high schools overseen by the board. We urge you to reject this takeover attempt and to vote for incumbents Nancy Kendierski and Chris Severson and candidate Jennifer Chen for the Acalanes Union High School District board.

Jim Landau  
Orinda

#### Endorsing Foreman, Smith and Sturm

Lafayette has great schools. As former school board members we are proud of the part we played in building and sustaining the educational programs that support every student's success.

Today, we are supporting the following candidates for the Lafayette School Board: Katy Foreman, Dave Smith and Rob Sturm. We are confident that they will ensure the continued excellence of our schools and reflect the values of our community. These candidates are knowledgeable about educational issues, and have outstanding records of contributions to our schools and community. They will best represent all of our students, our teachers, our community, and our school district. Lafayette deserves and needs School Board members who will continue to bring our community together.

Please vote for these candidates on Nov. 8 to ensure the excellence of schools in Lafayette for our students.

Ann Appert (8 years)  
Judy Carney (7 years)  
Roger Falcone (6 years)  
David Gerson (8 years)  
Teresa Gerringer (19 years)  
Art Kapoor (6 years)  
Mary McCosker (13 years)  
Shayne Silva (18 years)

## More on November's ballot than you realize

Over the past couple years we've read about school board takeovers by right-wing groups who have proceeded to fire administration, regulate sex education, and ban books. I thought we'd be immune from such attacks here in this liberal enclave of Northern California. However, a recent Cal Matters article titled "Back to school: California Republicans bet big on local board races," and a look at the slate of candidates running for the Acalanes Union High School Board has me alarmed. Could a takeover be happening here? Have pandemic lockdowns and frustrating back-to-school protocols so fractured our community that the door is now open for right-wing candidates to take control of our local school boards?

It's said that school board seats are supposed to be non-partisan positions. However, the values held by school board members influence the policies that shape our students' daily lives. It's important that we get more answers to fundamental questions about their candidacy:

- What do they believe is needed for our schools?
- What work have they done to create an informed point of view?
- How familiar are they with the learning environment?
- What is their perception of the current school administration and teachers?
- Do they support diversity programs?

Many of us moved here for the high-quality public education. Let's not endanger this jewel of our community. Please research the candidates on November's ballot, demand more visibility into their platforms, and keep monitoring their campaign contributions at

[www.cocovote.us/run-for-office-or-file-a-measure/campaign-contributions/KarenJaworski](http://www.cocovote.us/run-for-office-or-file-a-measure/campaign-contributions/KarenJaworski)

Moraga

## Lafayette School Board election

This year's election for Lafayette School Board, like many school board elections around the country, is an important one that merits the attention of all Lafayette residents. The markedly different platforms represented by the candidates offers one of the clearest choices for voters in recent history.

Our public schools have had a long tradition of academic rigor and excellence, while providing a safe and supportive environment for all children. In addition, our schools offer forward-thinking programs to ensure that our students are prepared to positively contribute to the society of our future. The quality of our schools and their positive impact in our community is one of the primary reasons why so many of us live here.

Our schools have also benefitted greatly from a high level of parental engagement. Katy Foreman, Dave Smith and Rob Sturm have demonstrated the highest level of parent volunteerism and leadership in the Lafayette School District. They have dedicated their time to the schools, volunteered on the PTA, raised money for LPIE and served on the Lafayette School Board. They know and understand the schools and this community. We are all fortunate to have the opportunity for the three of them to continue in their service and their leadership.

At this critical time for our children, our city, and our country, our school system cannot afford to move backward in its curriculum and programming. My vote is for Katy Foreman, Dave Smith, and Rob Sturm. They have the experience, qualifications and commitment to inclusivity to move our schools forward.

Sean Emerson George  
Lafayette

## Sturm, Smith, and Foreman for Lafayette School Board

Lafayette Education Association (LEA) is proud to endorse Rob Sturm, Dave Smith, and Katy Foreman as candidates for the Lafayette School District Governing Board. These three have shown a commitment to education and community as evidenced by the long list of committees, councils, and associations to which they have been

or currently are members.

Rob Sturm has served on the Lafayette School District Governing Board since 2017 and has been President for the past two years. He was a calm and objective voice of reason as our district and community weathered the challenges of the pandemic. Dave Smith was appointed to the Governing Board in June 2021 and immediately made an impact. As a board member, the questions he asks show a willingness to learn and the statements he makes show how quickly he has learned. In all things, Dave presents considered views based on facts. Katy Foreman has an impressive background in service to our schools. She has served on various parent organizations, often in a leadership position. In all things, Katy is steadfastly centered on inclusion and well-being for everyone.

At a recent LEA Members' Meeting where all six candidates for school board spoke, it was obvious that Rob, Dave, and Katy were deeply familiar with our district's curriculum and programs, its financial structure, and the needs of the students, employees, and parents. All three candidates possess their own individual strengths and expertise that will make them invaluable members of the Lafayette School District Governing Board. In addition, these three candidates possess the ability to accept and welcome others and they put this ability into practice consistently.

Lafayette School District needs leaders with such depth of knowledge and character and Lafayette students deserve leaders who will always have students' best interests as their focus. Rob, Dave, and Katy are this type of leader. Lafayette Education Association, as the representative for certificated and credentialed staff in the district, feels that Rob Sturm, Dave Smith, and Katy Foreman are the best candidates for Governing Board. Please cast your vote for Sturm, Smith, and Foreman!

Debbie Deitch, Lafayette Education Association President  
Lafayette

#### A Crucial Vote

In 2020, over 7,000 community members signed our petition affirming that Acalanes Union High School District and Lafayette School District students deserve to learn in classrooms that are anti-racist, anti-biased, and inclusive. We heard you loud and clear, and our school districts were listening closely too.

Today we invite you to revisit Support Racial Equity at LAFSD and AUHSD at [change.org](https://change.org) to receive an update on the tremendous progress we have made. We also call on you to join us in this critical moment.

As we approach the upcoming school board elections, we have seen two vastly different groups of candidates emerge. We would like to highlight candidates who have been champions for this cause.

The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) goals that our districts have met are based on data that show when students feel seen and supported, it has a positive and direct impact on their academic success, mental health, and sense of safety. This change that has allowed students to thrive as leaders and as learners, is now under attack. In this election, every voice and every vote is critically important.

In November, Walmorinda voters will choose three candidates to fill three open seats on the LAFSD and AUHSD Governing Boards. As authors of this petition, a parent group with a multi-year track record of service to both school districts, we offer our full endorsement for LAFSD candidates Katy Foreman, Rob Sturm and Dave Smith, and AUHSD candidates Jennifer Chen, Nancy Kendzierksi and Chris Severson. These candidates have a strong history of supporting DEIB efforts in our schools and communities.

All of our families belong. All of our children deserve to see themselves reflected in what they learn. It is not hyperbole to say that our community is at a tipping point. We need each other. We have seen the beautiful change that can happen when families, board members, faculty and administrators collaborate across our districts. Let's make sure this continues - together.

Lamorinda Community for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging in Education

### City Meeting on SP Creek Restoration

The FlowWest 2019 Plan was designed to minimize environmental impacts (e.g. tree removal, hardscaping) and has the approval of the Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Sept. 14 Lamorinda Weekly article on creek restoration ignores that Planning Director, D. Buckley, noted this plan as an alternative and concentrates only on the PPlaceWorks plan to keep the broken, strait-jacketed channel. It was stated the PW plan "would result in no net rise of flooding." True but it does not improve habitat nor hydraulic function. In fact, no net rise is a requirement of ANY creek restoration project.

Director Buckley thought the 2019 concept would "need approval from all property owners" but this is not exactly true as only 2 properties have the space to approve meandering. Furthermore wouldn't the PW ADA trail through parking lots and private land require approval from all property owners? The mention of transmission lines as a constraint applies to development, but not to creek restoration.

A positive outcome: PW writes that "research into property ownership and easements would be necessary" - something that is overdue. The one thing we all agree on is that the downstream culvert is undersized for the amount of runoff we can potentially get in a heavy storm. No one has addressed this issue due to cost. SP Creek last flooded at the culvert in 1995.

Cinda MacKinnon  
Orinda

### Shapiro for Moraga Town Council

We're writing to express our strong support for David Shapiro for Moraga Town Council. We have known David for over a decade, and he offers indispensable skills to the Council: he is thoughtful, respectful, and even-keeled, and possesses wide-ranging legal expertise-having excelled as federal prosecutor and private attorney for over 40 years-that will be of great value to the Town.

While serving as a U.S. Attorney and Chief of the Criminal Division in San Francisco, David prosecuted complex drug, mafia, and white-collar cases. In private practice he has litigated securities and accounting fraud, real estate disputes, banking law matters, and other varied legal topics, and provided pro-bono counsel to individuals unable to afford lawyers.

David's stellar career leading government and law firm offices, along with his investigative and trial experience, will enhance Moraga's ability to navigate new state housing mandates, zoning law changes and development proposals. He is intensely committed to ensuring that our town preserves its historic semi-rural character and scenic beauty throughout this process.

David has lived in Moraga 26 years. His kids grew up here, went to our schools, and were active in sports and theater. He and his family care deeply about our town.

Moraga will benefit from a Council of smart, hard-working and analytic people who can consider all points of view and work together toward consensus. David is the consummate professional and will fulfill that role with distinction.

Please support him with your vote.

Barry and Sue Behr  
Moraga

### Vote for David Shapiro for Moraga Council

We support David Shapiro for the Moraga Town Council's open two-year seat. We first met David and his family through our daughters and have since come to know him and his wife Tina well, meeting often at Rancho Laguna Park to walk our dogs together and to clear overgrown weeds.

David is dedicated to protecting open space which is central to Moraga's identity. He also recognizes that the state now requires Moraga to plan for additional growth. His goals during this planning process are to enhance our commercial

"downtown" areas while minimizing adverse impacts on traffic, scenic corridors, and open space so that Moraga's special character and quality of life are preserved. We are confident David will use his legal expertise and intellect to work collaboratively with our town council, staff, and residents. We believe his readiness to meet the challenges of the position will benefit the people of Moraga.

William Faoro, PE

Board of Directors - Moraga Local Sales Tax Oversight Committee (Measure K)

Elizabeth Faoro

Former Moraga Parks and Recreation Commissioner

Moraga

#### Moraga Town Council Endorsement For Candidate David Shapiro

As a longtime (33 year) Moraga resident, I am enthusiastically endorsing David Shapiro for Town Council. David's successful legal career began as a federal prosecutor with the U.S. DOJ where he notably helped create the Office's securities fraud and computer fraud sections before venturing into private practice with nationally renowned firms. The Town needs council members with David's passion for public service, proven analytical, intellectual and consensus building skills, and wisdom and clear eyed judgment based on long years' experience handling complex and challenging problems. David is honest, fair minded, approachable and understands Moraga's community values. David will be an outstanding council member.

Jim Wraith

Moraga

#### Support for Steven Danziger

As a 50 year resident I have seen many changes in our area. One of the most dramatic has been the amount of property clearing along evacuation routes. The MOFD Chief and Fire Board have done a great job to try and make us all safer. I believe we are fortunate to have Director Steven Danziger as District 3 representative on the Board. Steven has impressed me with his understanding of the issues, his leadership, qualifications and responsiveness. He understands government, Fire and cares.

Steven is running for re-election against an opponent who does not appear to have any experience in government or fire. Steven has over 3 decades, including 20 years as Administrative Manager of Oakland Fire. Steven was Board President for two terms and is involved in our community. He is a MOFD Ambassador and on the CERT Team. He chairs the Parks and Rec Commission, volunteers at the library and at the Orinda Nature Area with Toris .He does much more including organizing Blood drives and will soon give Red Cross donation #100!

Steven knows the Fire Service at every level and is doing a fantastic job. I know he is ready to continue to make our community safer. Please join me in re-electing Steven Danziger to the MOFD Board.

John "Bob" Heath

Orinda

#### Hasler will bring valuable skills to MOFD board

Greg Hasler has lived in Moraga for over 22 years and as a longtime resident has contributed in numerous ways as a community volunteer. His background in finance and consulting would bring the resources we need to meet the expanding demands being placed on the fire district staff to ensure we are better prepared to avoid the disasters which have plagued many other communities in California. I know Greg well, and am confident that his intellect and common sense approach would bring satisfactory solutions to any situation or which may arise in respect to the Moraga Community and fire safety. This is why I am endorsing Greg Hasler for MOFD District 1.

Steven Christensen

Moraga

Hasler Uniquely Qualified to Make a Difference!

MOFD, (Moraga Orinda Fire District), has numerous conflicting demands on its limited financial resources. For example, several of the fire stations are old and need major repairs or replacement. Also, there are increasing demands for more resources to be directed towards abatement and fire prevention. Greg Hasler's broad experience as a CPA and his extensive financial background as a consultant where he led diverse teams to solve complex problems would significantly help the board find solutions to these demands on the budget. We need him on the board. This is why I am supporting Greg Hasler for MOFD in District 1.

Kathy Cropper Dana  
Moraga

Dell'Aquila for MOFD board

This is in support of Vince Dell'Aquila's candidacy for the MOFD Board of Directors. I have known, and worked in volunteer roles with Vince for over 27 years. He is as capable, dedicated and altruistic as anyone could wish to have serve on the Board. In Vince's broad experience as an Educator (Including Miramonte Hight School Athletic Director), General Contractor, Non-Profit Board member and Firewise Neighborhood Leader, he has successfully collaborated with a variety of stakeholders, for years. Vince is uniquely qualified to prioritize and implement MOFD goals. I can't overstate how valuable he will be for the MOFD Board, and Community.

Bill Cosden  
Orinda

Elect Vince Dell'Aquila to the MOFD Board - District 3

I am writing in support of the candidacy of Vince Dell'Aquila for the MOFD Board of Directors, District 3. While we have excellent firefighters and substantial resources dedicated to our fire district, we need to do more to become a true fire adapted community. This will involve proactive engagement by MOFD board members to help our community get ready for a major fire event. The district needs to spend more resources on education, improved fire detection technology and community communications. Vince is a long time Orinda resident and has been an educator and coach at Miramonte High School for many years. He will bring the energy and focus needed to help our neighborhoods prepare for the existential threat of a wild fire.

Jim Keefe  
Orinda

Elect Vince for MOFD

I am writing in support of the candidacy of Vince Dell'Aquila for the MOFD Board of Directors, Division 3. I have known Vince for 25 years and have worked closely with him in his roles as Athletic Director of Miramonte High School and coach of Miramonte and Solano College teams. Vince is hard working, conscientious, works well with others, and is a man of integrity. I am confident he would make a positive contribution as a member of the MOFD Board of Directors.

Steve Harwood  
Orinda

Chris Young for MOFD Division 1

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Chris Young for the MOFD Board of Directors. Chris is an independent and balanced candidate who is running



solely because he wants to give back to Moraga, and to the fire district whose outstanding work he so greatly values. As 10-year Moraga residents with two young children, Chris and his wife are invested in our community, and his top priority is serving the safety and well-being of our residents. Chris is 100% committed to keeping MOFD locally controlled, and to ensuring that it is managed in a fiscally responsible manner. He also wants to facilitate collaboration between labor, management and administration to reach consensus whenever possible. This is why he has support from Moraga residents, past MOFD Board members, and our firefighters as well. Effective communication between MOFD and the community regarding fire prevention and safety is increasingly vital as the risk of wildfire grows, and Chris's expertise as a marketing and communications executive will add a welcome new skill set to the Board. He is exactly what MOFD needs to keep it running smoothly and successfully and I urge Division 1 residents to elect Chris Young to the MOFD Board.

Ann Walgenbach

Residential Leader of the Bollinger Canyon Road Firewise group  
Moraga

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

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